

St. Clare helps Haiti

Students around the Archdiocese of Baltimore are not only celebrating Catholic Schools' Week theme of "Dividends for Life," they are living it when it relates to helping victims of the recent Haiti earthquake.

In Essex, St. Clare School has been touched by the tragedy in a personal way. Its parish has an active Haitian committee and a strong bond with St. Francis parish in Desarmes. St. Clare has been trying to raise funds to build a cafeteria for a school there and sent a contingent of people to Haiti last year with toiletries, toys and money for the families for their sister school and parish.

St. Francis' pastor, Celestin Mackenzy, who has visited St. Clare, said his parish was damaged, but remained intact. He has contacted St. Clare since the tragedy, and his words have proved poignant.

"I think that this disaster strikes particularly close to home for us because of the special relationship we have had with these people for quite some time," said Mary Belz, a social studies and French teacher. "I have been reading the correspondence we get from Father Mackenzy to the students, and they are very moved."

The school's National Junior Honor Society chapter has been selling bottled water to benefit the country and students pray and have class discussions daily about the tragedy. The eighth-grade class has tweaked their weekly current event assignment to focus on Haiti.